

# Random Encounters

## Weaving a Web of Evil

By Dale Donovan



### The Members

A nest of spell weavers and their servants have taken root in the sewers, crypts, or catacombs beneath the city. They have formed a band of agents to do their bidding: steal magic items from across the city and deliver them to the bizarre spellcasters. Last week's installment described their organization. This time, we look at the spell weavers and their servants directly.

The organization run by the spell weavers has no name, since this nest of spellcasters has never been known to use mundane speech; if the multiarmed humanoids refer to it at all, they simply call it "the organization." Some of the spell weavers' agents, however, have taken to calling it the Web, probably because the six-armed spellcasters with the insectlike faces remind some of spiders.

The spell weavers themselves number five, and they seldom leave the confines of the underground region they have claimed as their own. They can telepathically communicate with their agents (or anyone else, for that matter) within 1,000 miles. On those rare occasions when they must venture beyond their "home," they always do so under the veil of a *polymorph self* spell to mask their otherworldly appearance.

No single spell weaver rules the others or makes decisions for the entire group. As a telepathic race, these monstrous humanoids confer on and form a consensus on every issue before any action is taken. The individuals are not mindless drones, however; each has its own personality. These spell weavers differ slightly from those presented in the *Monster Manual II*, most notably in that they possess more hit points.

**Spell Weavers (5):** hp 50; see *Monster Manual II* page 187.

While the spell weavers here are in almost-constant telepathic contact, each remains a distinct individual. Since the bizarre spellcasters lack names as we understand them, they are referred to as Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon.

**Alpha:** Alpha is the most aggressive member of the nest. It is also the one that most often ventures beyond the confines of the band's lair to explore the city above and to seek out especially powerful magic items for the band's agents to acquire. Alpha prefers attack spells and seemingly shares in the humanoid philosophy that the best defense is a good offense. This spell weaver has splotchy beige scars on its otherwise milky white skin.

**Beta:** Beta is the methodical researcher and most cautious member of the group. Beta casts the *identify* spells that categorize the magic items the band obtains. It tests the items and determines whether an item is potent enough to retain or should be sold back to the city above (or sent to other "Webs") for supplies, cash for bribes, and so on. It seldom leaves the lair, and it concentrates on defensive spells. This spell weaver's neck is long even for its race.

**Gamma:** Gamma is the least experienced member of the band. As it is not known how long the race lives (or even exactly where they come from), determining its age in meaningful terms is pointless. Gamma is cautiously curious regarding the city above the band's lair and the upper world in general. Thus far, it has visited the city only a few times and always in the company of Alpha. It may strike out on its own soon, however. Gamma tries to choose a balanced array of spells each day. This spell weaver has faint gray speckles across the back of its six hands; this is a family trait.

**Delta:** The most experienced member of the band, Delta has spent time on the campaign world before. In fact, it narrowly escaped a confrontation some years back with a coven of beholders. Several of Delta's fellows perished under the eye beams of the terrible orbs before Delta rallied its remaining compatriots and drove off the floating horrors. Whether this indicates some larger, long-standing enmity between the races is unknown. Delta's mandibles have a distinct pinkish cast to them. Delta always chooses *blink* and *lightning bolt* among its spells, since these two have served it well in the past.

**Epsilon:** The final member of the band is the most curious about the races that occupy the city above the lair. While Alpha spends time there as a challenge to itself, Epsilon ventures above ground simply to study the people living and working in the city. While much is thus far incomprehensible to it, Epsilon



hopes to learn and understand more through patient observation. It most consistently studies the verbal and physical interaction of the city's inhabitants, trying to discern the strange rules of this odd society. The spells *mage hand* and *telekinesis* are always among Epsilon's choices since it uses them to cause events that evoke reactions from the city's inhabitants: a spilled drink, a coin purse moved, a chair slid from beneath a person in the act of sitting down, and so on. Epsilon does not do such things because they are funny; in fact, the spell weaver may not understand humor as a concept. Such acts do garner reactions, however, and that is all it seeks. Epsilon is taller than the other spell weavers of the nest; it stands 5 feet, 5 inches high.

Each of the spell weavers has charmed one of their base's former masters, a grell, as its personal servant.

**Grells (5):** hp 32; see *Monster Manual II* page 121

### **Bringing the Parts Together**

The members of this organization may interact with the PCs without them knowing it at first. Perhaps the PCs are victims of a theft of a magic item while they stay at an inn. (Do they keep watch throughout the night when in town?) Another option is to have the PC with the most roguish tendencies find herself dealing with the spell weavers . . . the hard way (via some form of domination). If the PC does fall prey to the "request" to swipe magic items, will the rest of the party be safe from her current mission?

### **Coming in Part 3 of Weaving a Web of Evil**

Next time, we present a series of adventure hooks by which DMs can introduce the spell weavers and their Web into campaigns.

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